

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 7.120

or activity which is the subject of the application.

(b) *Voluntary compliance.* If the review indicates noncompliance, an applicant may agree in writing to take the steps the OCR recommends to come into compliance with this part. The OCR must approve the written agreement before any award is made.

(c) *Refusal to comply.* If the applicant refuses to enter into such an agreement, the OCR shall follow the procedure established by paragraph (b) of § 7.130.

§ 7.115 Postaward compliance.

(a) *Periodic review.* The OCR may periodically conduct compliance reviews of any recipient's programs or activities receiving EPA assistance, including the request of data and information, and may conduct on-site reviews when it has reason to believe that discrimination may be occurring in such programs or activities.

(b) *Notice of review.* After selecting a recipient for review or initiating a complaint investigation in accordance with § 7.120, the OCR will inform the recipient of:

(1) The nature of and schedule for review, or investigation; and

(2) Its opportunity, before the determination in paragraph (d) of this section is made, to make a written submission responding to, rebutting, or denying the allegations raised in the review or complaint.

(c) *Postreview notice.* (1) Within 180 calendar days from the start of the compliance review or complaint investigation, the OCR will notify the recipient in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, of:

(i) Preliminary findings;

(ii) Recommendations, if any, for achieving voluntary compliance; and

(iii) Recipient's right to engage in voluntary compliance negotiations where appropriate.

(2) The OCR will notify the Award Official and the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights of the preliminary findings of noncompliance.

(d) *Formal determination of noncompliance.* After receiving the notice of the preliminary finding of noncompliance in paragraph (c) of this section, the recipient may:

(1) Agree to the OCR's recommendations, or

(2) Submit a written response sufficient to demonstrate that the preliminary findings are incorrect, or that compliance may be achieved through steps other than those recommended by OCR.

If the recipient does not take one of these actions within fifty (50) calendar days after receiving this preliminary notice, the OCR shall, within fourteen (14) calendar days, send a formal written determination of noncompliance to the recipient and copies to the Award Official and Assistant Attorney General.

(e) *Voluntary compliance time limits.* The recipient will have ten (10) calendar days from receipt of the formal determination of noncompliance in which to come into voluntary compliance. If the recipient fails to meet this deadline, the OCR must start proceedings under paragraph (b) of § 7.130.

(f) *Form of voluntary compliance agreements.* All agreements to come into voluntary compliance must:

(1) Be in writing;

(2) Set forth the specific steps the recipient has agreed to take, and

(3) Be signed by the Director, OCR or his/her designee and an official with authority to legally bind the recipient.

§ 7.120 Complaint investigations.

The OCR shall promptly investigate all complaints filed under this section unless the complainant and the party complained against agree to a delay pending settlement negotiations.

(a) *Who may file a complaint.* A person who believes that he or she or a specific class of persons has been discriminated against in violation of this part may file a complaint. The complaint may be filed by an authorized representative. A complaint alleging employment discrimination must identify at least one individual aggrieved by such discrimination. Complaints solely alleging employment discrimination against an individual on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or religion shall be processed under the procedures for complaints of employment discrimination filed against recipients of Federal assistance (see 28 CFR part 42, subpart H and 29 CFR part 1691).